**TOO RASHER**

# **Regularly indulging in a bacon sandwich doubles the risk of an asthma attack, study claims**

It's thought that the additives in cured meats inflame the airways, making it difficult to breathe

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20th December 2016, 11:30 pm

A REGULAR bacon sarnie can almost double the risk of asthma attacks, a study claims.

Scientists found asthma patients who regularly ate cured meats – such as bacon, ham and salami – were up to 76 per cent more likely to suffer severe breathing difficulties.

There are 5.4 million people with the condition in the UK – and it kills an average of three people every day.

The new research suggests what they eat plays a major role in the number of attacks they suffer.

Experts claim preservatives known as nitrates or high salt content in cured meats may be responsible for making asthma symptoms worse.

They fear the additives may inflame the airways, making breathing harder.

Lead researcher Dr Raphaëlle Varraso, from the French Institute of Health and Medical research, said:

“Higher cured meat intake was associated with worsening asthma symptoms over time.”

The findings are a new blow to fans of bacon and other cured meats.

The World Health Organisation last year warned that eating large amounts of foods like bacon, hot dogs and other processed meats can increase the risk of bowel cancer.

In the new study, published in the journal Thorax, scientists tracked the diet of 971 asthma patients over a 20 year period.

Around 14 per cent of those eating less than one portion of cured meat a week saw their asthma symptoms worsen.

This went up to 20 per cent of those consuming between one and four portions of bacon, ham, salami or cured sausage.

And symptoms worsened in 22 per cent of those eating four or more portions.

Overall, those who ate the most cured meats were 76 per cent more likely to experience worsening asthma than those who ate the least.

While obesity is known to increase the severity of the condition, the researchers found it accounted for just 14 per cent of the raised risk that comes from eating lots of cured meat.

The researchers adjusted their results for other factors such as smoking, physical activity, age and other aspects of diet.

Even after this, it appears cured meats appear to have a direct impact on asthma.

Previous research has shown that eating cured meat regularly has also been linked to lung cancer and other chronic lung diseases.